Baseball as (Pan)America

A Sampling of Baseball-Related Metaphors in Spanish

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Baseball as America is the title of major exhibition of baseball-related memorabilia organized by the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York, and currently touring the United States, with stops at ten cities around the country. The exhibition, which opened in New York City in March 2002 and will end in Houston, Texas, in August 2005, offers an unprecedented opportunity to view some five hundred artifacts that until now could only be seen by people who could visit Cooperstown. The official web site of the exhibition stresses the close links between baseball and the cultural history of the United States, including the broad claim that “nearly all Americans participate in our National Pastime [sic] . . . often without knowing it.” To back up that statement, there is mention of certain baseball-related expressions (e.g., “ballpark estimate,” “Three strikes, and you’re out”) that are commonly used in everyday discourse, often by persons who have no particular interest in or familiarity with the sport itself.¹

Many other examples come to mind: the assertion that certain individuals will “never get to first base” with a proposed undertaking, or that they are “way off base” in their claims or suggestions; complaints by one person that someone else “threw him a curve,” or that he—the speaker—“had two strikes against him” at the outset, and so on. It is only natural, given the position of baseball as “our national pastime,” that its popularity and influence should be manifested in our everyday speech. What is perhaps less expected is the extent to which baseball has become a source of
popular metaphors in the Spanish speech of the Americas, a sign that the game itself is no longer to be regarded as simply “American” but is indeed “Pan-American.”

A detailed account of the origin of baseball and its subsequent spread to other countries of the Western Hemisphere is not relevant to my purpose, which is to examine the linguistic result, not the process, of its increasing popularity. A few benchmarks will be useful, however. It was long held that baseball as we know it was originated by Abner Doubleday, a respected Civil War veteran, in Cooperstown in 1839, but further investigation has determined that the rules governing the modern game were first drawn up in 1845 and that the following year saw the first organized game played under those rules. By 1856 baseball was being referred to as our national pastime, and in 1869 the Cincinnati Reds became the first “professional” baseball team.

Baseball is also the “national game” of Cuba; its introduction and development in that country followed fairly soon after its establishment in the United States and remained unaffected by political considerations. According to Roberto González Echevarría, the first baseball bat and ball arrived in Cuba in the luggage of one of a trio of young men returning to Havana after six years of study at Springhill College, Alabama (González Echevarría 1999, 90). The year was 1864, the American Civil War was drawing to a close, and Cuba was still a colony of Spain. What is generally (though inaccurately) recognized as the first organized baseball game in Cuba was played ten years later in the city of Matanzas between a team from that city and one that had traveled there from Havana (pp. 75–77). By the mid-1890s, the game had evolved from largely amateur to predominantly professional and had become deeply rooted in Cuban popular culture (p. 105). As González Echevarría observes, while noting the sporadic popularity of soccer (formerly in disfavor because of its association with Spain), “. . . on the whole, growing up Cuban meant growing up with baseball as an integral part of one’s life. Baseball was played since the beginning of the nation; hence it was part of the nation” (p. 110). It is not surprising, then, that—as we shall see—by far the richest repertoire of baseball-derived metaphors and sayings in Spanish is found in Cuban popular speech.

Cubans were also involved in spreading baseball throughout the Caribbean area, whether as visiting teams or members of local
clubs, to whom they passed on their skills as well as their knowledge of the rules and finer points of the game. According to Alan M. Klein, two Cuban brothers named Aloma introduced the game to the Dominican Republic in 1891, and it was already being played in Puerto Rico and Panama (1991, 16). Klein, who titles his history of Dominican baseball *Sugarball*, observes that in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, baseball "grew up" in the sugar refineries (p. 6), and González Echevarría offers a fascinating description of "sugarmill baseball" in Cuba in the first half of the twentieth century (1999, 192–200). In some instances, U.S. naval or military presence or U.S. commercial interests also contributed to the establishment of the game.

Although Róger Matus Lazo, in his study of the use of baseball-derived metaphors in Nicaragua, does not provide specifics about the history of the game in his country, he refers to the "enormous preference" for the sport there and maintains that metaphorical language drawn from baseball "is in essence the speech of the people, or rather its soul" (my translation) (Matus Lazo 1998, 9). According to Tito Rondón, baseball in Nicaragua was given its start in the 1880s by American businessman Albert Addlesberg in Bluefields, the capital of the Atlantic coastal region, then under British occupation. Addlesberg imported the necessary equipment from New Orleans and persuaded two cricket teams (cricket being the dominant sport in the British-controlled area) to switch to baseball.

In Venezuela, as in Cuba, baseball owed its inception to the enthusiasm of young men returning from their studies in the United States, though the introduction took place in the early 1890s, considerably later than in Cuba. By 1895 Caracas had a Baseball Club, started by four brothers and their socially upper-class friends, and the first official game was played in May of that year. The Baseball Club fielded both teams, and they included three Cubans who were living in Caracas. "Baseball talk," consisting of the essential terminology of the game, became something of a fad and was soon picked up by the local press. In 1912 the sport received an important boost from an American department-store owner in Maracaibo, William H. Phelps, who imported baseball equipment only to find that it remained unsold because apparently no one there knew how to play. He then set about organizing three teams, and by 1920 there were at least ten ballparks in the city.³
The introduction of baseball into Panama coincided with the hiring of the first workers on the Panama Canal project early in the twentieth century, and there is even speculation that some, at least, were hired for their baseball skills in recognition of the importance of providing recreation for the large population of workers. Baseball remains today the most popular sport in Panama, Nicaragua, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and of course Cuba. Elsewhere in Latin America, soccer—fútbol in Spanish—dominates by a wide margin, although baseball is also played.

As can be seen, baseball’s popularity is greatest in the Caribbean area, and strong links have developed between major league baseball in the United States and teams of various Caribbean countries. In the years before the integration of the major leagues, the Negro Leagues in the United States were an important source of opportunity and experience for Latin American players, many of whom are of mixed African descent. Klein, in his study of Dominican baseball, asserts that

to any of the tens of thousands of gifted players in the Dominican Republic, pelota (baseball) is an opportunity to escape a life of poverty; while to the major league franchises there, the country is a seemingly endless source of cheap and genuine talent. . . . There is nothing comparable to it in the United States, nothing as dearly held as baseball is for Dominicans. Americans may love the game of baseball as much as Dominicans do, but they do not need it as much (1991,1).

The same observation may apply, though not necessarily to the same degree, to the other nations linked geographically to the United States by proximity and the waters of the Caribbean. Indeed, approximately 30 percent of current major league players in the United States are Latinos, most of them foreign born. The list of outstanding Latino players includes Hall of Famers Roberto Clemente (Puerto Rico), Martín Dihigo (Cuba), Juan Marichal (Dominican Republic), Luis Aparicio (Venezuela), Rod Carew (Panama), Orlando Cepeda (Puerto Rico), and Tony Pérez (Cuba). Home-run record breaker Sammy Sosa, no doubt a future Hall of Famer, is from the Dominican Republic.

The extent to which baseball has had an impact on everyday Spanish speech is no doubt affected by such factors as the general
popularity of the sport in the particular country; the length of time the game has been part of the national culture; and the influence of various media, such as sports journalism and television and radio broadcasts. That impact is not easy to assess. Relatively few examples of baseball-related expressions can be found in dictionaries of “regional speech,” and even fewer studies have devoted specific attention to them. (Cuba is, of course, the great exception.) Nor do we have much information on who uses such expressions, whether they are employed primarily by young people, or by men and boys rather than by women, or in urban environments as opposed to the countryside.

Initially, of course, baseball terminology in Spanish was strictly utilitarian, enabling sportswriters, broadcasters, and announcers, as well as fans, to describe and discuss the action of the game. In a study published in 1954, Seymour Menton identifies three ways in which baseball vocabulary has been incorporated into Mexican Spanish: adopted directly from English and written with English spelling, e.g., “fly”; written phonetically so that the Spanish pronunciation replicates or at least approximates the English word (flai); and translated using existing Spanish words (elevado, an “elevated” hit). In some cases, all three processes may be applied to the same term, as in the example just given, although one or more of the three may eventually fall into disuse. Menton points out that the process by which English words are Hispanized is an oral one, based on the way a particular term sounds to the speaker of Spanish; the written form of the word does not enter into the process (1954, 478–79). His observation is well illustrated by a term such as the Cuban ampaya, which at first glance seems undecipherable but which, when read with Spanish pronunciation, achieves a fairly close approximation to its English equivalent, “umpire.” Occasionally new terms are created in Spanish to translate some of the less common elements of the game, e.g., tira-tira [literally, a “throw-throw”], a “rundown,” when a runner is trapped between bases by two opposing players who toss the ball back and forth as the runner tries to reach the safety of a base (pp. 478–79).

I shall not concern myself with the literal vocabulary of baseball in Spanish but with the figurative use of certain baseball terms and particularly with their incorporation into proverbial phrases and proverbs. This article is, as the subtitle indicates,
merely a sampling of baseball-related expressions in popular speech and represents a portion of a longer study on which I have been working for some time. The expressions fall into four general categories: 1) single words (mostly verbs) that have acquired a figurative meaning in addition to their literal use in relation to baseball; 2) baseball-related phrases that have become part of everyday speech; 3) full-fledged proverbs; and 4) proverb parodies that may or may not be used in actual discourse. For the annotations, I have used primarily published sources, with a few references to the Internet and items recorded in the field, and I have included multiple annotations when these come from different authors or regions, since such references indicate the popularity of the expression. The sources vary from the abundant publications of José Sánchez-Boudy, a Cuban now residing in the United States, and Samuel Feijóo of the Universidad Central de Las Villas in Cuba—both of whom devote specific attention to baseball-related expressions—to more typical compilations of regionalisms or Anglicisms from various Spanish-speaking countries that include only a scattering of baseball terms or metaphors that have become part of popular speech. Sánchez-Boudy’s collections of *cubanismos* are especially interesting because he frequently makes a point of identifying expressions that have emerged in the community of exiled Cubans in the United States, thus providing a useful time frame; and he specifically identifies expressions as derived from baseball, a helpful practice in cases that involve certain non-specific terms such as *bola* and *pelota* (both of which mean “ball” but not necessarily a baseball) or that refer to less familiar aspects of the game. Feijóo’s work, based in Cuba itself, covers a wide variety of verbal folklore and includes material collected, at Feijóo’s request, by a number of other individuals in various localities. Feijóo was also the editor of the folklore journal *Signos* (1969–89), in which a number of items included here were published.

The following list of sayings is arranged by keyword, using the principal word specifically related to baseball. Thus, *batear trescientos,* “to bat .300,” is under *batear; coger a alguien fuera de base,* “to catch someone off base,” under *base; and *jugar en grandes ligas,* “to play in the big leagues” (to be very intelligent), under *liga.* Although a good many collections list proverbial phrases in the infinitive form, I have chosen to use inflected verbs to provide a better sense of how the phrase actually sounds. For each entry, I
have provided first a literal translation and then a figurative interpretation. Some expressions, such as *estar en tres y dos* (to be at three and two, i.e., in a difficult position) presuppose a familiarity with at least the basic rules of baseball; others do not. However, in Spanish as in English, once an expression has become firmly established in popular speech, it can be used and understood by speakers and listeners regardless of their knowledge of its background. Proverb parodies, on the other hand, can be fully appreciated only by those who are familiar with the original proverb. I have included in the annotated list a number of parodies quoted by Sánchez-Boudy from the exile periodical *Zig-Zag Libre*, published in Miami, Florida. Their precise status in Cuban popular speech is not clear, although Sánchez-Boudy indicates that he has heard them used within the exile community in Florida.

Annotated List

**Abanícar** (v.), to fan, strike out
1. Nunca abaniques la brisa aunque sea con majagua [Never fan the breeze (strike out) even with a bat made of majagua (wood)]. Don’t ever fail. Majagua is a hardwood used for baseball bats in Cuba; the word often refers to the bat itself. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 81.

**Aluminio** (n.), aluminum
Partió el aluminio [He split the aluminum (i.e., the bat)]. Said of someone who has performed any kind of task exceedingly well. Although more appropriate to bats made of wood, the phrase has carried over to modern metal bats. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 103.

**Ampaya** (n.), umpire
Muerto el ampaya, se acabó el “strike” [Once the umpire is dead, there are no more (called) strikes]. Once the cause is eliminated, the effect ceases also. A parody proverb modeled on the widely used “Muerto el perro, se acabó la rabia,” [Once the dog is dead, the rabies is over with]. The Anglicism “strike” is often Hispanized as *estrai* or *estraik*. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 52

**Ao/Aut** (n.), out
1. Es un aut vestido de pelotero [He’s an out dressed as a ballplayer]. He’s a failure. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 269.
2. *No es un ao fácil* [He’s not an easy out.] Said of someone difficult to deceive. Dominican Republic: Cruz Brache 1978, 198.

3. *No te atrevas, que eres aut* [Don’t dare (run), or you’ll be out]. Don’t take the risk because you’ll fail. The expression images an attempt to steal a base without being caught by the pitcher’s throw. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 426.

ÁRBITRO (n.), umpire

El que a buen árbitro se arrima, buena decisión le cobija. [He who gets close to a good umpire is covered/sheltered by a good decision]. A parody of the well-known Spanish proverb, “El que a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra le cobija” [He who gets close to a good tree is sheltered by a good shade]. Árbitro is the standard term for someone officiating at a game (not necessarily baseball). Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 52.

BASE (n.), base

1. *A veces hay que pasar a alguien con tres en base antes de que te batee un “jonrón”* [Sometimes you have to walk someone with three men on base, rather than have him hit a home run off you]. Sometimes one has to accept an unfortunate situation to avoid a worse one (in this case, it is better to walk in a run rather than risk a four-run “grand slam”). Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 68. Sánchez-Boudy describes this saying as “very popular.”

2. *En base, y próximos* [sic] a home [On base, and close to home]. Said of a woman in an advanced state of pregnancy. Mexico: Gómez Maganda 1963, 2:120. The plural form used by the collector appears to refer back to the term estados grávidos (pregnant conditions) in the preceding sentence. See also the next entry.

3. *Hay seis hijos y uno en tercera base—con un jit sale* [There are six children and one on third base—a hit will bring him home]. He has six children and another due any time now. A runner on third is in scoring position and likely to reach home plate on any single. Mexico: field.

4. *Lo cogieron/agarraron fuera de base* [They caught him off base]. Said of someone caught redhanded in some kind of wrongdoing. If a runner takes a lead off a base, ready to run to the next one, and the pitcher throws the ball to the player covering that base so that the runner is tagged before he can get back to the base, the runner is out. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 78; Espina Pérez 1972, 17; Oraá 1973, 94. Dominican Republic: Cruz Brache 1978, 36. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 40; García Santos 1997, 2297. Venezuela: Rosenblat 1960, 59; Núñez and Pérez 1994, 58.
5. Tiene las bases llenas [He has the bases full]. A) He has a large family. Mexico: Jiménez 1970, 161. B) She already has plenty of suitors. Venezuela: Rosenblat 1960, 59.

6. Tú no llegas ni a primera base [You won’t even get to first base]. A prediction that the person addressed will fail in a proposed project. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 127; García Santos 1997, 1275.

Batazo (n.), a powerful hit
1. ¡Qué batazo! [What a huge hit!] Said when someone tells a big lie or a fantastic story. Panama: field.


3. Ése da batazos como los de Ted Williams en los buenos tiempos [That fellow hits the ball hard like Ted Williams in the good old days]. He achieves one success after another in anything he undertakes. The late Hall of Famer Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox was considered one of baseball’s greatest hitters. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 52. See also the previous entry.

Bate (n.), bat
1. A ése le gusta dar con el bate [He likes to hit with the bat]. Said of someone who likes to eat or drink at the expense of others. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 19. The verb cachar (to catch) and the noun ca[t]cher are used in a similar fashion.

2. Bate de fongueo no sirve para batear [A fungo bat is no good for hitting (in a game)]. Every activity or situation has its own specific needs or equipment. A fungo bat is a soft bat used to hit balls for fielding practice. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 23.

3. El que va al bate con tres en base puede tocar planchita aunque sea "eslóger" [He who comes to bat with three men on base may bunt even though he’s a “slugger”]. Always be prepared for the unexpected. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 66.

4. Es el dueño del bate, del guante, y de la pelota [He’s the owner of the bat, the glove, and the ball]. He’s the chief, the one in command. The order of bate and guante may be reversed. In baseball games among neighborhood children, the one who owns the equipment is the boss. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 52, 189.

5. Ése es un cuarto bate [He’s a fourth batter, i.e., a cleanup hitter]. He is extraordinary in any activity: working, studying, eating, etc. The fourth batter in the lineup is typically a strong hitter who—it is hoped—can clear the bases of any of his three predecessors who may be there. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde

6. Partió el bate [He split the bat]. He performed exceedingly well. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 103. See also aluminio.

7. ¡Qué piernas! A la verdad Marquetti con ese par de bates . . . [What legs! Truly, Marquetti with that pair of bats . . .]. A piropo or “street compliment” voiced when an attractive woman passes by. The ellipsis leaves to the hearer’s imagination what Marquetti would do. Cuba: Feijóo 1973, 47. Agustín Marquetti was an exceptionally strong hitter and a star member of the Havana team in the late 1960s and 1970s (González Echevarría 1999, 373).

8. Se siente el cuarto bate [He thinks he’s the fourth batter, i.e., the cleanup hitter]. He is vain or self-important; he thinks he’s indispensable. Mexico: Jiménez 1970, 163. See also item 5.

Bateador (n.), batter
1. Es bateador de largo metraje [He’s a long-distance hitter]. He has a lot of children. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 53.

2. Es bateador designado [He’s the designated batter]. He’s the official replacement for someone else (in a meeting, business appointment, etc.). In the American League, the pitcher, who is seldom a strong batter, is replaced by a designated hitter, who bats in his place in the lineup. In the National League, the pitcher bats for himself. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 19.

3. Es bateador emergente [He’s a pinch hitter]. He’s substituting, especially on short notice, for someone else in any kind of situation: work, social relationship, etc. Cuba: Santiesteban 1997, 57. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 19. Panama: field (Estoy bateando de emergente [I’m pinch hitting]).

Batear (v.), to bat, hit
1. Batea cuatrocientos en la liga de los pesados [He bats .400 in the league of the disagreeable]. He’s a most unpleasant person. This batting average (.400), which represents the proportion of hits to the number of times at bat is exceptional. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 119.

2. Batea lo mismo en el Almendares que en el Habana [He hits the same on the Almendares team as on the Habana team]. He’s very knowledgable; he has a wide range of skills. Almendares and Habana were two leading teams and perpetual rivals throughout the history of Cuban baseball. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1986, 76.

3. Batea sobre trescientos [He hits over .300]. He eats a great deal. A batting average of more than .300 is considered very good. Cuba: Espina Pérez 1972, 17; Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 53.
4. Bateó una y perdió el juego [He hit once and lost the game]. He did something correctly but committed lots of errors. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 53.

5. Cuando el mal es de batear, no valen bases por bolas [When the problem is batting, bases on balls don’t count]. When a player is in a batting slump, getting on base because of a walk doesn’t improve the situation. A parody of a well-known Cuban proverb, “Cuando el mal es de cagar, no valen guayabas verdes” [When the illness affects the bowels, green guavas don’t help]. Green guavas have a constipating effect. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 52.

6. El que sabe batea solo [He who knows how bats alone]. He who is really skilled or knowledgeable needs no assistance from others. Attributed to a Havana bus driver known for his use of proverbs. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 75.


8. No hay por donde batear [There’s no place to hit the ball, i.e., no place where an opposing player can’t get it]. There’s no solution to the problem at hand. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 53.

Bola (n.), ball (both the object that is thrown and the pitch that is not within the strike zone)

1. Al que tiene buena vista no le tires bola mala [Don’t throw a bad pitch to someone who has a “good eye” (for judging pitches)]. If your opponent is an expert, don’t try to deceive him. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 82.

2. Botó la bola [He “booted” the ball]. He made an error in some kind of enterprise. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 21. Note the contrasting meaning given to this phrase in Puerto Rico (next two entries). See also pelota.

3. Botó la bola [He hit the ball hard (walloped it)]. He was successful in his undertaking. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 31; García Santos 1997, 2375. Dominican Republic: Cruz Brache 1978, 27. See also pelota.

4. Botó la bola y rompió el bate [He hit (creamed, walloped) the ball and broke the bat]. He was extraordinarily successful; an intensified version of the previous entry. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 31.

5. Cantó la bola bien cantada [He called (literally, “sang”) the pitches clearly]. He spoke the plain truth; he was outspoken. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 60.

7. En el béisbol la bola es redonda, cualquier cosa puede suceder [In baseball, the ball is round; anything can happen]. An observation on the uncertainties of life in general. Puerto Rico: García Santos 1997, 1271.


9. La bola se va . . ., se va . . ., se va . . ., y se fue! [The ball is going, going, going, gone!] An indirect way of saying that someone is guilty of a blatant falsehood. The words mimic the way in which a radio or television announcer often describes a home run. Bola, a general term for “ball,” is widely used with the figurative meaning of “rumor” or “false story” (Real Academia Española 1956, under bola). The metaphor generates the image of a bola of major proportions, “out of the ballpark.” Panama: field.


11. Le tiró a / Se fue con la bola mala [He swung at/went for a bad pitch]. He made a bad mistake; he was a failure. Cuba: Feijóo 1984, 121; Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 62, 346.


13. Para el que tiene vista no hay bola rápida [For someone who has a good eye (for perceiving the pitch), there’s no fastball]. If one has the proper abilities for what he wants to do, he cannot be defeated. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 12.

14. Se llevó la bola y el bate [He took away with him the ball and the bat]. Refers to someone who fails at a certain activity but will not allow others to continue. The imagery is from neighborhood games where the equipment is often the property of one of the players. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 231.

15. Tiene mucho en la bola [He has a lot on the ball]. He is very talented, very intelligent. Literally, the expression refers to a pitcher who can make the ball behave so it deceives the batter and prevents him from getting a hit. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1986, 13.

**Bombo/Bombito (n.),** a fly ball that is easy to catch, a “pop fly” or “pop-up”

Fue un bombo/bombito al pitcher [It was a pop fly to the pitcher]. Said of something, e.g., an exam, that was extremely easy. Puerto Rico: Claudio de la Torre 1989, 32; Deliz Hernández 1998, 325; García Santos 1997, 2664. Claudio de la Torre also gives “bombo al cátcher” with the same meaning.

**Brazo (n.),** throwing or pitching arm

1. Cuidado con el que no tiene brazo que a lo mejor batea [Beware of the one who does not have a good (throwing) arm; he is probably a strong batter]. If someone has a weakness in one area, he may have strengths in another. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 124.

2. Hace rato que estoy calentando el brazo [I’ve been warming up my arm for some time now]. I’ve been preparing to take action. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103.

**Bull Pen (n.),** bull pen (area where relief pitchers warm up before going into the game)

Hay movimiento en el bull pen [There’s movement/action in the bull pen]. Something (unknown but potentially important) is happening. Action in the bull pen typically means that the current pitcher will be replaced by a relief pitcher. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 241.

**Cá(t)cher, Quecher (n.),** catcher

1. Ése es cácher [He’s a catcher]. He eats and drinks at the expense of others but never pays the bill himself. A catcher receives the balls thrown by the pitcher, hence the metaphorical meaning. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 23. Venezuela: Rosenblat 1960, 60 (un tronco de quecher [a great catcher]). See also pícher.

2. Es cácher, pitcher, y fielder [He’s a catcher, pitcher, and fielder]. He can do everything; he’s a one-man team. Mexico: Gómez Maganda 1963, 1:208.

**Cantar (v.),** to call (said of the umpire); literally, “to sing”

Estoy cantándolas como las veo [I’m calling them as I see them]. I’m giving my true opinion of the situation. The pronoun las refers to bolas or pitches. Puerto Rico: García Santos 1997, 2033. The same phrase is used in English.

**Cargabates (n.),** bat carrier, batboy

1. En esa novena yo voy de cargabates [On that team, I’m just a
batboy]. In that group/company, I occupy a very lowly position. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103.

2. Es un cargabates [He’s a batboy]. He’s second rate, not worth anything. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1986, 85.

CERO (n.), zero
1. Cero y van dos [Zero (balls) and two (strikes)]. A warning that someone has made two mistakes, told two lies, had two narrow escapes, etc., and is one strike away from being out. Panama: field.
2. A mi nadie me da nueve ceros [No one gives me nine zeros]. No one is going to defeat me. Nine zeros would indicate that throughout the nine innings of the game, the individual has remained scoreless; in other words, he has suffered a humiliating defeat. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 114.

COGIDA (n.), catch
Es como la cogida de Sagüita [It’s like Sagüita’s catch]. It’s an extraordinary accomplishment. Alberto “Sagüita” Hernández was a player with the Havana ball club in the 1940s. According to Sánchez-Boudy, he was known for making an important catch that gave his team the championship. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 400. In this country, a 1954 World Series catch made by Willie Mays of the New York (now San Francisco) Giants is similarly famous.

CURVA (n.), curve (ball)
Esas curvas no la[s] resiste nadie [No one can resist (swinging at) those curves]. A statement about the effectiveness of curveballs thrown by a pitcher is transformed here into a piropo, a street compliment, aimed at a young woman with an attractive figure. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103.

EMBASARSE (v.), to get on base
1. Dile a tus puros [padres] que yo me embaso rápido [Tell your parents I’ll get on base quickly]. Tell your parents I’m prepared to marry you right away. As given by the collector, this serves as a piropo, or street compliment, to an attractive female passerby. Feijóo 1973, 47.

ERROR (n.), an error, a misplay
Comes Around

2. Cero error, cero carrera [No errors, no runs]. Nothing important has been happening. Venezuela: Núñez and Pérez 1994, 122. See also *jit*.

**ESTRAIK**, **ESTRIKE** (n.), strike (a ball pitched within the strike zone and not hit by the batter)
2. Le tiraba sólo estrai[k]s [He threw only strikes to him]. He controlled him, would not let him advance. Sánchez-Boudy 1986, 29.

**FAO** (n.), foul ball, a ball hit outside the base lines
1. El que da mucho “fao” batea jonrón [The one who hits a lot of fouls can hit a home run]. The person who persists in trying will eventually succeed. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 124.
2. El que da mucho fao, se poncha o batea “jonrón” [The one who hits a lot of fouls either strikes out or hits a home run]. A variation on the previous entry. A batter who hits a lot of fouls has shown that he can hit the ball hard, and one day he’ll hit it straight for a homer. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 12.
3. Ése me resultó un fao [That fellow turned out to be a foul ball]. He turned out to be a disappointment (e.g., on a blind date). May be applied also to events. Venezuela: Rosenblat 1960, 60; Núñez and Pérez 1994, 226.

**FILDEAR** (v.), to catch, to field

**FILDEO** (n.), the act of fielding
Hay buenos en el fildeo y malos en el bateo [There are some who are good at fielding and bad at hitting]. An individual who is good at one activity may not be good at another; we all have our strengths and weaknesses. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 79.

**FLAI** (n.), a fly ball, a ball hit into the air
2. El que no echa una llanta no coge un flai [The one who doesn’t move
fast doesn’t catch a fly ball]. You have to be on your toes to succeed. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 76.


6. Si el flai es fácil no lo fíldees difícil [If the fly is an easy one, don’t make a difficulty out of catching it]. If a problem is easily solved, don’t turn it into a major obstacle. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 80.


GOMA (n.), home plate

1. Está/Viene por la goma [He is/is coming right across the plate]. He’s performing admirably. Originally referring to a pitcher’s ability to throw strikes, its use has been broadened to include virtually any activity. In the Dominican Republic, it is applied to someone who is very strict, even severe in his actions. Cuba: Oraá 1973, 94; Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 185. Dominican Republic: Cruz Brache 1978, 119. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 87.

2. Partiste la goma [You split the plate in half]. Your performance was excellent. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103.

GORRA (n.), cap.

Botó la gorra [He threw down his cap]. He lost his composure. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 26. Matus Lazo adds that the adjective gorrudo refers to someone who makes a habit of this gesture.

GUANTE (n.), glove


2. Le dio el guante y la pelota [He gave him the glove and the ball]. He let someone else have a turn. The image suggests the pitcher handing over the ball and glove to the relief pitcher who is about to take his place, but the phrase can be applied to any situation in which power or responsibility passes from one person to another, whether temporarily or permanently. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 408.
3. Guante sin grasa/Guante que no se engrasa no coge bola [A glove that is not greased will not catch the ball]. Any job requires appropriate equipment, and the equipment must be properly maintained. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 80. Elsewhere Sánchez-Boudy identifies castor oil as the substance used to grease the glove and make it supple (1993, 67).

4. Si no la coge no es el guante sino el pelotero [If he doesn’t catch it, it’s not the fault of the glove but of the ballplayer]. If someone doesn’t succeed at doing something, he should not blame the equipment or tools but himself. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 80.

5. Tiró el guante [He threw down his glove]. He lost his temper. A player may sometimes be ejected from the game for throwing equipment. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 26.

HOMÉ(n.), see JON

HUELGA (a surname)

2. Si te coge Huelga, te acaba [If Huelga catches you (leading off first base), he’ll finish you off]. A warning not to take chances. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103. See the previous entry.

JIT (n.), hit
1. Cero jit, cero carrera [No hits, no runs]. Nothing happened. Dominican Republic: Cruz Brache 1978, 35. See also error.

2. Dió un jit / La metió de jit [He got a hit]. He was a great success at the conference, meeting, etc. Nicaragua: Mántica 1973, 64. Venezuela: Rosenblat 1960, 59.


JON, JOM (n.), home, home plate
1. ¡A morir a jon, Reñazco! [Home (plate) or die, Reñazco!] Try as hard as possible; hang in there until the end. Reñazco is presumably a Nicaraguan ballplayer, but the collector does not identify him. Nicaragua: Peña Hernández 1968, 305.

2. El que se tira siempre en jon a la larga se cuela [He who always slides into home will eventually score]. Persistence will win out in the end. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 124.
3. No pisa el jon [He doesn’t step on the home plate]. He consistently has bad luck; he never succeeds. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 279.


5. Pícher que repite punta [A pitcher who repeatedly pitches over a corner of the plate will get hit for a home run]. A pitch on the corner may fool the batter once or even twice, but if repeated too often, it may be hit hard. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 82.

**JONRÓN (n.), home run**


3. Tres líneas de ron no batea jonrón. [A glass of rum won’t hit a home run]. One who drinks a lot of alcohol won’t be able to perform well. Tres líneas (three lines) is a measure used by bartenders. The saying involves a play on the words ron ‘rum’ and ron ‘run’ (as in home run). Spanish pronunciation does not distinguish between final m and n. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 37.

**JUEGO (n.), game**

1. Este juego lo pícheo yo a la blandita [I’m pitching this game like softball]. I’m proceeding carefully and gently in this matter. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103.

2. Ha realizado un juego perfecto (cero jits, cero carreras, cero errores) [She has achieved a perfect game: no hits, no runs, no errors]. Said of a virtuous woman who has passed marriageable age without accomplishing anything good. Mexico: Jiménez 1970, 165.

3. Hicieron un doble juego/jugada [They made a double play, i.e., two outs on a single hit]. Said of any situation in which two objectives are achieved simultaneously. In a typical double play, the player who is on first base is put out when he is forced to run to second, and the batter is put out at first. Mexico: Gómez Maganda 1963, 2:164.

**JUGADOR (n.), player**

Está como el mal jugador: ni pitcha, ni catcha, ni deja batear [He’s like the bad ballplayer: He doesn’t pitch, nor catch, nor let anyone
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bat]. Said of someone who does nothing himself and keeps others from accomplishing anything, either. The pattern is the widely known Spanish proverb, “Como el perro del hortelano, ni come (las berzas) ni (las) deja comer” [Like the vegetable farmer’s dog, he doesn’t eat (cabbages) and won’t let anyone else eat (them)]. In current usage, it is usually shortened by omitting the words in parentheses. Mexico: Jiménez 1970, 163 (second part only); field (also with ni deja cachar [nor let anyone catch]).

JUGAR (v.), to play
Dime con quién juegas y te diré si pierdes [Tell me with whom you play, and I’ll tell you whether you’ll lose]. A parody of one of the commonest proverbs in Spanish, “Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres” [Tell with whom you go around, and I’ll tell you who you are]. Although the wording is generalized (jugar can apply to any game), the collector groups it with other parodies that almost all refer specifically to baseball. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 53.

LANZADOR (n.), pitcher
Ven con nosotros; José está de lanzador [Come with us; José is pitching]. Come along, José is buying the drinks. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 28. Lanzador (thrower) from the verb lanzar (to throw) is the Spanish term often used instead of the Anglicism pítcher or pícher. Cf. the use of cátcher noted earlier.

LIGA (n.), league
2. Está quemando la liga [He’s burning up the league]. Said of someone who is triumphing in any sort of endeavor. Dominican Republic: Cruz Brache 1978, 119.
3. No batea en liga fu [He doesn’t bat in a bad league]. He’s a good person. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 397.
4. Quiere batear en la liga grande [He wants to bat in the big league]. He wants to be a star in whatever he does. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1986, 106.
5. Ese es de grandes ligas [He’s a big leaguer]. He’s outstanding. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 52.

MAJAGUA (n.), baseball bat (made of majagua wood)
Me dejó con la majagua al hombro [He left me with the bat on my shoulder (waiting for the pitch)]. He left me waiting and never showed up. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103.
NOKOLBOL (n.), knuckleball, a type of pitch
1. El libro es bueno pero aprende a darle a la «nokolbol» [A book is good but learn to hit the knuckleball]. A book can provide helpful information, but practical experience is necessary also. The knuckleball is a difficult pitch to hit. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 81.
2. El que tira «Nokel bol» [sic] siempre se embasa [He who hits the knuckleball always gets on base]. He who goes slowly will succeed. The knuckleball is a slow pitch. Sánchez-Boudy considers this to be the equivalent of “El que va despacio va lejos” [He who goes slowly, goes far]. Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 81.

NOVENA (n.), team (of nine players)
1. Batean/juegan en la misma novena [They bat/play on the same team]. They are much alike, have the same defects, share the same opinions. Cuba: Pérez López 1968, [27]; Oraá 1973, 95; Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 247.
3. Ése juega en dos novenas al mismo tiempo [He plays on two teams at the same time]. He doesn't take sides; he doesn't compromise himself. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 248.
4. Está jugando contra una novena que tiene diecisiete filetes y la cerca corrida [He’s playing against a team that has seventeen fielders and the fence moved farther out]. He’s playing against impossible odds; he can do nothing. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 248.
5. No juego en esa novena [I don’t play on that team]. I don’t agree with those individuals. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 248.
6. Están poniendo una novena con dieciocho filetes [They’re putting up a team with eighteen fielders.] They’re making it impossible to win, to achieve anything. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 172.

PALOMÓN (n.), a pop-up, an easily caught fly ball
Ése tipo es un palomón al cuadro [That fellow is an infield fly]. He is easily deceived or defeated. If applied to a situation, something is easily achieved. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1986, 115.

PELOTA (n.), ball; baseball; ball game
1. Ahí sí es verdad que dan a la pelota [There they really hit the ball]. They really know how to do things right. Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 25.
2. Botó la pelota [He hit the ball (hard)]. A) He made a mistake (cf., in English, “he booted the ball”) or he told a big lie. B) He did something extraordinary or unexpected. The two contrasting meanings

3. Botó la pelota y estilló el bate [He hit the ball hard and shattered the bat]. He performed extremely well. Puerto Rico: “500 dichos” 1997, under baseball.

4. El que sabe tirar pelotas no necesita que nadie le caliente el brazo [He who really knows how to throw the ball doesn’t need anyone to warm up his arm]. The expert in any field performs well without assistance from anyone. Before entering the game, a pitcher normally warms up by throwing balls to a teammate. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 75.

5. Esa pelota ni la viste [You didn’t even see that ball]. You didn’t anticipate what was going to happen. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103.

6. Ése juega con pelota de poli [That fellow plays with a hardball]. The situation is serious; he doesn’t fool around. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1978, 269.

7. La pelota es redonda y viene en caja cuadrada [The ball is round and comes in a square box]. Anyone may experience a setback. Pelota is a general term for “ball,” and the proverb may or may not have been derived from baseball. Sánchez-Boudy, however, includes it among baseball-related sayings. Cuba: Feijoó 1984, 82; Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 80. Puerto Rico: Fernández 1991, 2204.

8. Le puso la pelota para que la bateara [He pitched the ball to him so that he could hit it]. He treated him gently. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1984, 74.


10. No ataja la pelota [He can’t stop/cut off the ball]. He can’t do his work properly, carry out his assigned task. Mexico: Jiménez 1970, 163.

11. Pelota que no has de coger, déjala correr [If you aren’t going to catch the ball, let it roll]. A parody of the well-known proverb, “Agua que no has de beber, déjala correr [If you aren’t going to drink the water, let it flow], often used to mean “If you aren’t going to use something, let someone else enjoy it” or “If you’re not serious about the girl, let her alone.” Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 52.
Pichar, Pichar (v.), to pitch
2. ¿Quién va a pichar esta noche? [Who’s pitching tonight?] Who is paying (e.g., for drinks or food) tonight? Venezuela: Rosenblat 1960, 60.
3. Pichea y cachea al mismo tiempo [He pitches and catches at the same time]. He is bisexual. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1986, 50.

Pichier (n.), pitcher
1. Al pícher que tira rectas siempre le batean la pelota [The pitcher who always throws straight will have his pitches hit regularly]. If one always does things the same way, opponents will soon catch on. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 12.
2. Con pícher que batea duro ándate con disimulo [With a pitcher who hits hard, proceed cautiously]. Be careful when you are facing a highly qualified opponent. As a general rule, a pitcher is not a strong hitter, but there are exceptions. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 12.
3. Cuando el pícher se vira, en vez de correr es mejor volver a base [When the pitcher whirls (toward first base), instead of running, it’s better to return to the base]. Don’t take unnecessary or unwise risks. The runner on first base typically takes as much lead toward second as he dares, and the pitcher may turn quickly and throw the ball to put him out. The runner must dive for the base to reach it before the ball does. If the runner continues to second, he runs the risk of being tagged out or caught in a rundown between two opposing players. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 66.
4. El que es pícher no necesita que por él tiren pelotas [He who is a pitcher doesn’t need anyone to throw the ball for him]. A person who is qualified for his work doesn’t need anyone to do it for him. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 75.
5. Pícher que mucho se vira sorprende [A pitcher who often whirls (to throw to first) will (eventually) take the runner by surprise]. Perseverance wins. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 23.
6. Si el pícher no se descuida, ni el venado se le escapa [If the pitcher is not careless, even a deer won’t get away from him]. If you keep an eye on your enemies, they won’t take you by surprise. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 12.
7. Son pítcher y cátcher [They are (like) pitcher and catcher]. Said of two people who aid or support one another. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 237.
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**PISAR (n.),** to touch base

Pisa y corre [He touches base and runs]. Said of someone who is in a great hurry. Panama: field.

**PLANCHITA (n.),** a bunt (a short, downward hit that touches the ground not far from the batter)

El que toca planchita también batea [The one who bunts also hits the ball hard]. One can never fully know another person’s capabilities; therefore, one should always be alert. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 22.

**PONCHAR(se) (v.),** to strike out, be struck out

1. Ahí te ponchaste tú [That’s where you struck out]. That’s where you failed/made your mistake. Dominican Republic: Cruz Brache 1978, 6. Venezuela: Rosenblat 1960, 60. Rosenblat considers the term ponchar(se) to have reached Venezuela via Cuba.

2. Combinando lanzamientos se poncha el bateador [By combining pitches, you strike out the batter]. The person who uses various strategies to get ahead will always win out. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 83.

3. Cuidado con el que se poncha pero le tira duro a la bola [Be careful of the one who strikes out but swings hard at the ball]. Be careful of the one who makes mistakes but is also capable of great success. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 68.

4. Está ponchado en el trabajo [He has struck out at work]. He has been fired or laid off. Nicaragua: Matus Lazo 1998, 30.

5. Está ponchando en casa de la novia [He is striking out in his girlfriend’s house]. He’s making a poor impression with his girlfriend’s family. Puerto Rico: García Santos 1997, 2030.

6. El que se va con la mala se poncha [The one who goes after a bad pitch will strike out]. The one who goes after something false will end up a failure. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 81.

**POSICIÓN (n.),** position

 Está en posición anotadora [He is in scoring position]. He is on the verge of a triumph (e.g., in his career). A runner on second or third base is said to be in scoring position because a hit can bring him home. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1986, 122.

**PRIMERA (n.),** first base; first baseman

1. Ése no llega ni a primera [That fellow won’t even get to first base]. He will have no success in what he is attempting to do. Puerto Rico:

2. La primera que no se estira no coge bola [The first baseman who doesn’t stretch (exert himself) doesn’t catch the ball]. You get out of anything (e.g., a task or job) what you put into it. The person who doesn’t do his best doesn’t succeed. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 67.


4. Lo importante es llegar a primera base [The important thing is to reach first base]. Initial success is necessary for further accomplishments. Puerto Rico: García Santos 1997, 758.

5. Tira a primera base a ver cómo te sale [Throw to first and see what happens]. Try a certain strategy and see whether you succeed or not. Instead of pitching to the batter, the pitcher may throw to first base to try to put out a runner who has taken a big lead. Cuba: Batista Moreno 1973, 103.

RILÍ (n.), release (from a contract)
Ella le dio su rilí [She gave him his release]. She (his wife, girlfriend) left him. Also used to refer to someone who has been fired from his job. Dominican Republic: Cruz Brache 1978, 58.

SEGUNDA (n.), second base
1. El que roba la segunda lo agarran fácil en tercera [He who steals second is easily caught on third]. The person who takes a risk and succeeds will be watched more closely from then on. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 12.

2. Político que roba segunda te tumba [The politician who steals second will deceive you]. The politician who is underhanded will defraud the public. Stealing second (running from first to second when the ball has not been hit) is perfectly legal in baseball but entails a certain amount of deception as well as the ability to run fast and a willingness to take risks. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 25.

3. Si no corres como un venado, no robes la segunda [If you can’t run like a deer, don’t steal second]. Don’t try to do something for which you do not have the necessary qualifications. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 12.

TRES Y DOS (adv.), three and two (i.e., three balls and two strikes)
1. El que está en tres y dos puede tocar planchita [He who is at three and two may bunt]. The person who is in a difficult situation may
do something unexpected. A batter who has reached a count of three balls and two strikes will walk with one more ball or be out with one more strike. A bunt (a very short hit that lands close to home plate) is an unexpected, but not unheard of, strategy in such a situation. Cuba: Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 66.


Wilson (adj.), Wilson, a brand of baseballs considered superior to others


2. Ése es Wilson Wilson Willie May[s]. (See previous entry.) He is absolutely the best. A superlative created by combining the Wilson brand of baseball with a reference to Hall of Famer Willie Mays of the Giants, considered by many to be one of the finest players in the history of baseball. Puerto Rico: Núñez de Ortega and Delgado de Laborde 1999, 164.

Notes

1. See the exhibition Web site www.baseballasamerica.org, in particular the section entitled Sharing a Common Culture. A book designed to accompany the exhibition, bearing the same title and subtitled Seeing Ourselves Through Our National Game, was published by National Geographic in 2002. A number of other Web sites describe or comment on the exhibition, such as the one mounted by the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, the venue of the exhibit from February to July 2003.

2. The term americano is often applied by speakers of Spanish to residents of the Americas as a whole, the more specific term for a citizen of the United States being norteamericano, “North American.” Baseball can therefore be described as un deporte americano in Spanish, but to convey its popularity in the Spanish-speaking Americas, speakers of English need to resort to a term such as “Pan-American.”
3. A summary of the history of Venezuelan baseball can be found on the Web site iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Fall02/Landino/ThePast.html. George Chevalier, the author of a series of reminiscences of early days in the Canal Zone, includes in his “When the Canal Zone Played Baseball” some brief references to the history of the game in that region (www.pancanalsociety.org/Articles/GC/Chevalier131.html).

4. The Web site www.internationalbaseball.org/southamerica.htm includes Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Peru, and Venezuela as regions where the game is played, at least on an amateur and in most cases very-limited basis.

5. www.zonalatina.com/Zldata230.htm. The Web site includes a list of Latino players and their salaries, which surely appear astronomical to most Latin American readers. According to another Web site, among slightly more than 14,000 major league players over the years, 340 have been born in the Dominican Republic, 206 in Puerto Rico, 148 in Venezuela, 90 in Mexico, 43 in Panama, 8 in Nicaragua, and 7 in Colombia (www.baseball-reference.com/bio). At the beginning of the season in 2000, there were 170 major league players from Latin America: 71 from the Dominican Republic, 33 from Puerto Rico, 31 from Venezuela, 14 from Mexico, 9 from Cuba, 8 from Panama, 3 from Colombia, and 1 from Nicaragua (www.latinosportslegends.com/LatinsinMLB_2000.htm).

6. A number of parodies attributed specifically to the humorist Membrillo, published in Zig-Zag Libre in April 1982, appear in Sánchez-Boudy 1993, 52–53. They are also included, without attribution, with numerous other examples of “baseball proverbs” in a separate section of the same author’s recent Diccionario de refranes populares cubanos (Sánchez-Boudy 2000, 79–85). I have incorporated some sample parodies into the annotated list.

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